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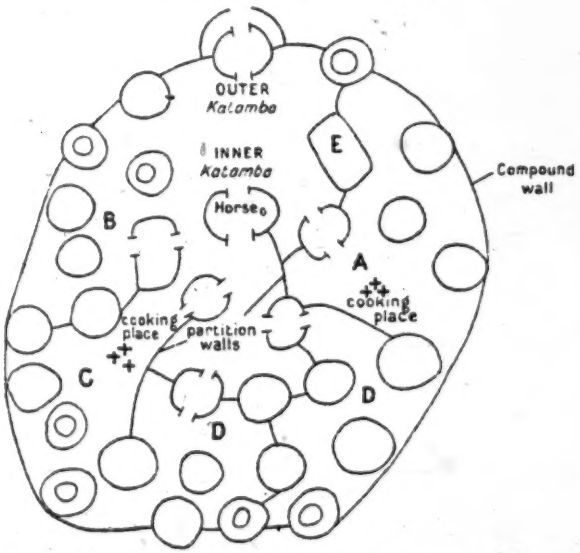
592 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found dis-
596 tributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the subdivision of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

[342]



○ Sleeping huts ⊂) Katamba A... partition of family head. B... partition of unmarried sons. C... partition of unmarried daughters. D... partition of married sons and younger brothers. E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discussions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and [621] 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*tswata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu tswata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kinship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar
596 to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families
369 are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

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CHAPTER IV

THE COMMUNITY: VILLAGE AND TOWN

621 THE description of 'areas of common life' must start with the description of the external arrangement, that is, forms of settlement. The Nupe live in large villages or towns. They have only one word for both, *eźi*, thus defining the essentially identical nature of the two forms of settlement. There exists another Nupe word, *tunga* or *kangi*, which is applied to very small settlements. But this name refers not so much to the size as to the different sociological nature of the settlement; for the *tunga*, unlike the *eźi*, does not represent an independent local unit but a 'daughter-settlement', a 'colony' of a village or town.

621 361 The size of the *eźi* varies considerably. Nupe Emirate counts three villages with a population of over or near a thousand: Doko with 800 inhabitants; Mokwa with 2,000; and Kutigi with 3,000. But there exist also smaller 'towns', villages the population of which had been reduced by emigration and which may be, in size, hardly bigger than a large *tunga*. The local arrangement of the Nupe village, large or small, is nearly always the same: clusters of compounds scattered comfortably over an area, each 'cluster' consisting of a number of walled compounds, 'houses' in native terminology, and forming what the Nupe call an *efu*, or ward. These village wards are separated by stretches of open land, spacious cultivated fields, studded with clumps of trees. More rarely the *efu* stand close together and are separated only by narrow thoroughfares between the walls of neighbouring compounds. This latter arrangement is typical of many riverside villages where, in narrow space, house presses upon house and compound upon compound. Each *efu* has its own name, derived either from a topographical peculiarity, e.g. Takogi, meaning 'the one below', or Kpacinefu, 'the river bank *efu*', or from a sociological feature, namely, the rank or profession of the people living in the *efu*, e.g. *efu* Žitsu, '*efu* of the chief', or *efu* Tswata, '*efu* of the blacksmiths', and so forth; or, finally, the name of the *efu* may refer to the origin of its inhabitants, betraying them as immigrants from another village or tribe, e.g. Yafu (abbr. for Eyagi-fu), 'Yoruba *efu*', or *efu* Daži, '*efu* of (the people of) Daži'. [103]

The Nupe *eźi* with its scattered *efu* clusters is encircled by a large town wall, or more correctly, used to be encircled by a town wall. It exists no longer, but its ruins can still be seen in many places, and all the people insist that formerly all 'towns' were protected by such walls. These crumbled ruins of the old town wall provide us with a piece of important historical evidence, which tells us, I think, why the Nupe have chosen just this type of settlement, in large populous 'towns', and not, for example, settlement in loosely linked, scattered homesteads; it allows us to grasp at least one of the motives behind this social development: the dangers of war.[1] Large villages represent in a country of

[1] The other motive is economic and is entailed in the organization of the Nupe system of production and exchange. (See p. 366.)

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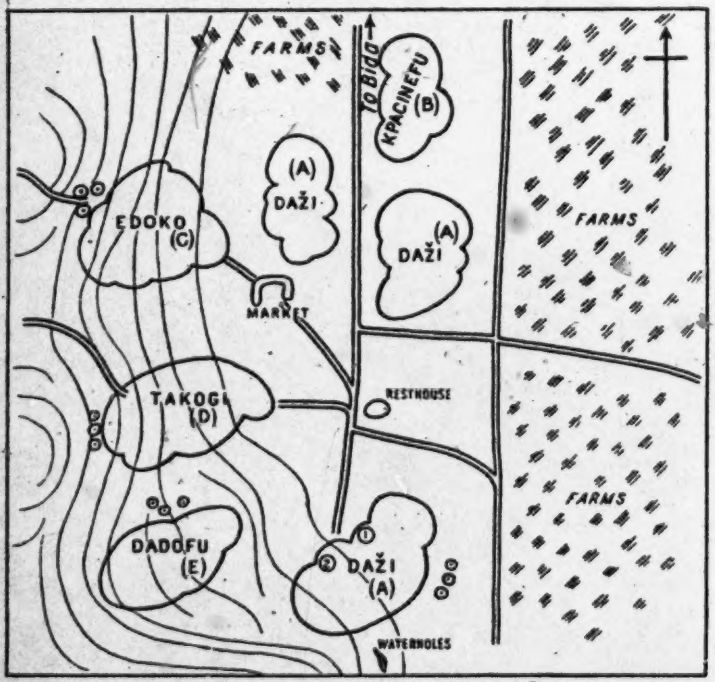
constant warfare the only safe method of settling. The small outlying settlements could quickly seek the protection of the walled town; a large concentrated population meant comparative security from raids, comparative safety in unsafe times. We have more historical data to support

SKETCH MAP OF DOKO



A-E are the five *efu* or wards, of the village. ⊙....roast ovens.
①....house of chief (*Etsu Doži*). ②....house of village priest (*Žigi*).

this interpretation. One or two Nupe villages have sprung from the amalgamation of small groups, and in one significant case this fusion of component groups into a single large 'town' can definitely be traced to the time of the Fulani wars. What is to-day the village of Doko originated then out of the fusion of a small hill-side village, called Edokó, with a village situated originally about two miles away, in the plain, by the name of Daži. To escape from the Fulani raiders the people of Daži moved to Edokó, into the protection of the hill-side. The new twin-town was called Doko, with Edokó and Daži as two of the five *efu* which form the village to-day; and the chief, who comes from the stock of the Daži people, still takes the title *Etsu* Daži, king of Daži.[1] We possess also

[1] How far a development such as this, with a large village growing out of the fusion of two or more component groups, is typical of Nupe settlement in general

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361 621 negative evidence to show that with the pacification of the country the reverse process has set in: Jima, once a capital of Nupe kingdom, a huge town to judge from the ruins of its town walls, is reduced to-day to a tiny village; most of its people have moved outside, and the eight former town-wards, still known by their old typical *efu*-names, are to-day scattered outposts, village 'colonies'—*tunga*.

621 The origin of the *tunga* settlements of Jima represents an unusual development. Normally the *tunga* reflects the expansion rather than the breaking up of the 'mother-town'. But the term *tunga* is not unequivocal. It refers to three different types of settlement. The first, the release of small groups for the foundation of 'daughter-settlements', is a direct consequence of the concentration of a large population in a single town. A growing population in the village, the need of new land, may lead to small groups moving into the uninhabited bush, to occupy virgin land and to found new settlements. A small section of one family at first, a few young men with their wives and children, the *tunga* may grow to a small hamlet embracing two or three large family groups. Or immigrants from another part of the country may choose to settle on the land which belongs to a certain village, and under its political protection: this settlement, too, will then be called *tunga*. Finally, the big landlords of Bida have settled their slaves and dependants on the land all round the capital, in small hamlets, called again *tunga*. But these settlements are in a different category, they represent not colonies of villages or towns but private property, farm settlements of individual landlords. A *tunga* is thus easily identified, for it is always referred to as a *tunga*, a 'colony', *of* a certain village or, in the case of private settlements, *of* a certain landlord. *Tunga* settlements seldom grow beyond three family groups. Should the population expand further, the *tunga* would again release some of its members who would leave the old settlement and found a new colony near-by. But it seems to have happened very rarely that a *tunga* grew into a 'town' proper—Gbangba, a prosperous village north of Bida and to-day the seat of a District Head, is the only example I can quote. Gbangba, however, was not a village colony but a *tunga* founded by people from Bida. On the other hand, I have seen several cases of *tunga* settlements which have grown out of each other, dependencies of dependencies. The *tunga* is itself a much more mobile settlement than the village proper. A *tunga* is often abandoned, and the people move to a new place, if there have been two or three bad harvests, or repeated cases of illness.

We understand the mobility of the *tunga* when we realize that these small farm settlements, founded by younger branches of families, can have none of the spiritual bonds—religious and ancestral—that would tie the 'real' village more permanently to the locality.[1] The same factor

I will not examine here. I may say that I have found two other typical instances; one I have described in *Man*, 1938, 85. There may be many more, of which the traces have become much more obliterated.

[778] [1] An exception is provided by certain cults which are linked with individual families and not with the village as such; a sacred shrine of this kind may thus be carried to a *tunga*. The *tunga* Shebe Woro, for example, harbours the sacred chain and the shrine of Tsoede—two paraphernalia of the *ndakó gbeyi* cult.

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621 also explains why *tunga* settlements rarely (if ever) develop into real 'towns'. The factor of size and numbers, too, plays its part. In order to provide that self-contained social and political life that is typical of the Nupe 'town', and in order to afford its inhabitants the political security which is part of the *raison d'être* of that form of settlement, a much larger concentration of people is necessary than the village *tunga* is likely ever to achieve in a sparsely populated country with so low a birth-rate. But the attitude of the people is as important: they cannot conceive of a *tunga* becoming an *ezi*—a rival settlement to their mother-town. The village *tunga* has no social life of its own: it possesses no market, no independent political organization, often no age-grades of its own, and celebrates its feasts and ceremonies with the 'mother-town'. 'Towns', on the other hand, are independent, self-contained units, which have little in common with each other, and often know nothing of their next-door neighbours. To become a 'town' would thus mean for the *tunga* to deny the very essence of its social identity.

Every village then counts, 'owns' as the Nupe say, a certain number of colonies, which surround it in a radius of six to seven miles, right up to the point where the area of the next village begins. Kutigi, for example, possesses six *tunga* settlements founded between 1860 and 1910. Five were founded by people from the two largest *efu* of Kutigi, one by people from Etsú, a neighbouring 'town', who preferred to settle on the more open and fertile land of Kutigi. Doko, a much smaller village but situated in a more densely populated area, owns nine large *tunga* settlements and a number of smaller, secondary, dependencies. Two of the large *tunga* settlements were founded by people of the Cekpă sub-tribe who fled from their homes during the Yoruba wars and settled in more peaceful Beni country. The other seven are village colonies proper. Interspersed between these colonies of Doko are four 'private' *tunga* settlements, founded by slaves and other dependants of Bida landlords.

The following examples may illustrate the organization of two comparatively recently founded *tunga* settlements:

Zaboru, a *tunga* near Sakpe, consisting of two compounds, was founded by the man Zaboru, together with his elder brother, the present Village Head of Sakpe, about thirty years ago. The two men went out together to find a place with new farm-land, and built first temporary, later permanent huts. The elder brother returned to Sakpe after the death of their father to assume his position as the new head of the family. In his place a third, youngest, brother, who had just married, went out to the *tunga*, about ten years ago, where he is still living.

Shebe Woro, belonging to the 'town' Shebe and consisting of two compounds, was founded in 1933, when a certain Kolo left Shebe 'because the place was too full'. Together with some relations and two friends he occupied a new place, about three miles away, deeper in the bush, and founded there the settlement now called Shebe Woro, which means, New Shebe.

342 361 Let us now go inside a Nupe village. I have described already its typical lay-out—the scattered *efu* and the walled compounds or 'houses'

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342 which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts,
361 mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and
[631] windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one
346 small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred
778 shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in
361 the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are
361 situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From
[312] here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to
[354 long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which
347] look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

● 621 The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary
571 of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

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pacts of friendship made, visits, feasts, and meetings organized regularly. Contacts and forms of intercourse may stretch beyond this area—they regularly do in trade connexions or in the contacts involved in the political system of the country. Moreover, modern communications have greatly extended their scope. Yet these contacts and single lines of intercourse hardly affect the self-containedness of the community. A sign of the tendency to seek regular contacts with places and groups without is travelling. And here we see that the villagers evince little interest in travelling and in visits to other towns and countries.[1] In the small Beni village Pichi, about five miles from Bida, only three men out of fifty have been across the Kaduna river or outside the area of their sub-tribe. Most peasants, at least the older men, with whom I have discussed travelling, said in so many words that travelling had no interest for them.

Again, the self-limitation of community life expresses itself in the parochial outlook of the villagers. There is a striking lack of interest in the life and customs of the peoples 'outside'; or the interest is of that lofty and self-centred kind that will credit anything unusual reported of 'foreigners'. When discussing with villagers the customs, for example, or the religious rites, of neighbouring communities you will be told: 'We don't know; we do this and that, but they may have different customs', or you will be given unreliable, second-hand information, often biased and sensationally made up. Certain of these opinions have become quite firmly rooted—commonly accepted popular theories about other communities. The people of Jebba Island professed to know nothing about the religious practices of Gbajibo, a village some twenty miles up the river—'they have quite different customs there' is what they told me. A visit to Gbajibo revealed that the religious practices of the two places were almost identical. In Bida and Doko I was told that the people of Etsú were blacksmiths by origin and possessed special blacksmith magic. The people of Etsú themselves had a quite different tradition of origin and their magical rites had nothing to do with blacksmith work. In several Nupe villages the people told me that while they themselves performed the *gunnu* ritual in the open, other villages possessed special sacred *gunnu* huts. I examined every case, but found no trace of this reported difference. This tendency to assume non-existent and exaggerate insignificant cultural differences between one's own village and other communities represents, on the ideological plane, the assertion of the cultural identity of the community. As in the case of the tribe, we find an ideology heedless of empirical facts supplying the conceptual background for a social configuration.

We must, however, qualify these statements about the self-contained nature of the village community. There exists one kind of interest and knowledge—and this time keen interest and on the whole well-informed knowledge—which embraces groups outside of the village community, namely, interest and knowledge bearing on the kingdom, its countries

[1] I am speaking here of the inland villages and not, of course, of the riverain Nupe, whose very existence depends on travelling. Nor do I refer here to migrations and similar permanent changes of residence.

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and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nin*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross, from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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CHAPTER V

THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE

621 THE political organization of the Nupe village differs in certain respects in different parts of Nupe-land, but the general outline of the system remains, with one or two exceptions, the same. Every Nupe village, as it constitutes a separate community, also constitutes a separate political system. The area over which its sovereignty extends is formed by the village and its *tunga*, the 'town' and its 'dependencies'. At its head stands the 'town-king', *Žitsu*, who, to use the language of the people, 'owns' the village—*u wũ ži*—and the land on which it stands. By this right of 'possession' he controls the lives of his community and the main resource from which it derives its livelihood, land. The close identification of chief and locality is often expressed in the title which the chief assumes and which is identical with the name of the village: the chief of Jebba (the correct name of which is Gebba) is known as *Gebba*, of Bele as *Belé*, and the old Beni 'town-king' of Bida styled himself *Bida*. In the chief, then, the collective existence of the village community is represented as in a symbol.

621 173 This political configuration is to some extent thought of as having evolved gradually in the course of time. But the Nupe village (unlike the kingdom) possesses no elaborate mythology which tells of the origin and the growth of the present polity. We have spoken of the vague interpretation in a kinship sense of the past of the village, according to which the people of the village have all descended from some common ancestor. As regards the specific political features, we find equally vague traditions of half-forgotten ancestors who were the founders of a village and the first settlers in the locality (we can disregard here the recent memories of fusion and separation of villages). The following tradition, referring to the village Doko, is a typical instance:

> Two brothers came from beyond the river, from a place called Gaze (a village on the river Kaduna). They came to a place now called Kopa [Kopa is about five miles from Doko, on the other side of the hill on the slope of which Doko is situated]. There was nothing in this place then save bush. They settled there, first as hunters, later they began to work the land. After two years the younger brother left Kopa and came down the hill to the place where Doko is to-day. He settled there and called himself chief. He became the first *Žitsu* of Doko, *Žitsu* Lefiya.

These traditions of origin become more articulate only where the tradition of the village can be linked with the semi-mythical history of Nupe kingdom and its ancestor-hero Tsoede. In a number of Nupe villages the people trace their line of chiefs back to one who was confirmed in his office by Tsoede, and invested by him with certain insignia and magical emblems. Of both Tsoede and these insignia we shall hear more at a later stage. Here it may be said that the ancestral chief thus

[p. 44]

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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi [illegible]on has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed [illegible]nship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nûsaši* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiši*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nûsaši* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunnu*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nûsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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who was reputed to possess strong and deadly magic had threatened his life; a family head in Kutigi that his family was too highly taxed; a man in Pichi that a neighbour had beaten his goat (which the other man had found eating his grain): these are some of the cases which a village chief and his elders may daily be called upon to decide.

The procedure is nearly always the same. The various news, requests, or complaints are communicated at once to the chief, directly, if the supplicant or bearer of the news has the chief's ear, that is, is himself a titled elder, and indirectly, through the family head or the *efutsó* (head) of the *efu* in which he lives, if the bearer of the news is an ordinary peasant. Upon receiving the news the chief will summon the head *nūsa* (the *Shesha* in Mokwa, the *Lile* in Doko, the *Nāeji* in other villages), and he in turn will call together the other members of the council whose co-operation is required: two or three of the senior elders—the members of the 'inner council'—and always the *nūsa* to whose kinship group or *efu* the litigant or supplicant belongs. Not only does this *nūsa* act, as we have seen, as the official informant of the chief on all matters concerning his group and locality, but his intimacy with the people whose case is to be heard, and his moral influence, make him an important witness and, when a decision has been reached, a guarantor of its execution. Before this tribunal, then, supplicants and litigants in the village appear. The discussion that ensues is informal, and devoid of the stiff procedure that characterizes, for example, the Native Court. Supplicant or plaintiff state their case in a few sentences—the Nupe are not fond of long speeches and elaborate expositions. Obscurities in the statement are unravelled in patient cross-examination, in which everyone present can take part. Then, at one point, the chief or a *nūsa* may suggest a solution, which may be agreed to by the others with the stereotyped expression *u ge*, 'it is well', or revised in renewed discussion. Very rarely do tempers flare up and the discussions become heated. The final decision of the chief and his council is pressed home in the form of advice, persuasion, warning. A discussion of this kind rarely lasts longer than two or three hours, after which time it will be interrupted to be resumed on a following day. Mostly one or two sessions suffice to arrive at the final decision.

But then, in more difficult cases, in which many witnesses have to be called and thorny problems of arbitration settled, the decision is taken out of the hands of the village executive. For the chief is not entitled to dispense formal justice and to enforce arbitration. He must send all legal cases to the professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*) of the district; moreover, litigants who are dissatisfied with the chief's decision may themselves bring their case before the professional judge or the District Head (a point to which we shall return later). This limitation of village jurisdiction makes it impossible to pronounce in more detail on the efficiency of the village council and the way in which it handles, or could handle, more severe conflicts. The gamut of advice, persuasion, and warning is the only one which it can use: the more strident notes of authoritative orders and severe reprimands are outside its scale.

That they, too, have a rightful existence in the administration of village affairs is shown in the organization, by chief and elders, of all concerted

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651 621 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal ceremonies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nûsafi* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. [694] And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 623 661 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also, in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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There is one exception—which proves the rule. In Kutigi all the members of the chief's family are addressed as *waci*, 'Great Ones', and though not shown special reverence are regarded somewhat as a class apart. The explanation is this: the rulers of Kutigi come from an alien group, those Bornu immigrants to whom I have referred already. Owing to their economic and educational advantages (they were Mohammedans in a pagan and rather primitive country) they had established themselves as the dominant group, and the leaders of the immigrants became the political rulers of the original inhabitants. In this position they were confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. In the Fulani dynasty of Nupe the Benu had an example close at hand how an alien group could arrogate to itself the position of a hereditary ruling caste. They followed it in every detail: from the Fulani kings they adopted the salutation *waci*; and like them they managed that the recognition of social superiority was extended not only to the actually ruling chief but to his whole kinship group—a whole hereditary ruling class.

BINDING FORCES

Let us try, in conclusion, to define the specific nature of the political unity achieved in the Nupe village. It must be emphasized, first of all, that it *is* a specific unity, and that it is achieved by mechanisms peculiar to itself. In other words, political organization is not—as is the case in many primitive societies—simply absorbed by religion, magic, or kinship, and the mechanisms of control which these domains of culture entail. Nor is it, on the other hand, possessed of any of the conspicuous instruments of political control which characterize other societies: a police or military executive, a disproportionate chieftain power, or an elaborate apparatus of coercion. Moreover, the connexion between political control and religious and kinship agencies is very close. Political organization delegates to the kinship system the important task of providing the executive organs for the community in the persons of the *nûsaʃi*, who, as we have seen, are village elders and family heads in one. And religious beliefs and practices supply the spiritual sanction of chieftainship and authority in general. But as important as these specific contributions of religion and kinship are certain less specific influences, by means of which both religion and kinship help to sustain the system of political control. Thus encouragement of intermarriage within the village community adds the strength of interlocked kinship relations to political ties; and the communal religious rites exercise, and underline in their own impressive fashion, the unit of the village group.[1] They do it consciously and openly: their dedication to the support of the village community expresses itself in the prayer formula which occurs in every religious ritual whatever its avowed purpose or the occasion of its performance: *eʒi u de lafiya*, 'may the village prosper'. Political control, kinship, and religion thus define coextensive social units. Only because

[1] This interdependence of political unit and religious congregation is analysed more explicitly in the case of the *gunnu* cult. (J.R.A.I., lxvii, 1937, pp. 91–130.)

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621 182 of this coextensiveness of the spheres of religious and political control could the village elders of Kutigi to whose 'strike' we referred above effect that political adjustment by religious pressure. And again only because of this coextensiveness of the spheres of political and kinship control could, in another instance, a family head be excluded from the ranks of the titled elders on the grounds that one of his sons had twice been caught thieving. The family head was identified with the moral standards obtaining in the kinship group the headship of which would have entitled him, in the normal case, to a position in the political executive. 'How can a man who cannot keep order in his own house,' said my informant, 'keep order in the village?' But these three agencies of control are only three in a multiplicity of coextensive forms of social organization: economic pursuits, the contacts of everyday life, recreation, education. The political activities take place within this one area of common life. Expressed in one formula: the political system and the closely knit social life of a single community organize an identical human substratum.

Here we may, in parenthesis, touch upon the theoretically interesting question whether this system of 'multiple control' which the political organization is capable of utilizing can be taken to explain the absence, in the case of the Nupe village, of the more conspicuous specifically political instruments of control. However, this question cannot be solved on the basis of Nupe material alone. For here the issue is confused by the fact that the state organization, superimposed upon the village system, obviates the necessity of the more essential of these instruments, especially with respect to legal and military executive. Indeed, the fact that the state removes graver legal cases from village jurisdiction releases the social system of the village from certain social pressure which must otherwise have necessitated a more strongly marked specific political authority.

621 622 182 This brings us to the question of the resistance of this delicately balanced system of multiple control to outside influences and, generally, the influence of change. Its efficiency is clearly a function of the uniformity of social interests obtaining in the community. It will fail as soon as the closeness of community life is broken by a strong divergence of interest. Extraneous changes creating new aims which are apt to dissociate the political executive from the rest of the people may disturb its equilibrium, which could then be readjusted only by a corresponding strengthening, at the cost of the other agencies in the multiple machinery of control, of political power as such. The most radical adjustment of this kind is that brought about by the modern political changes which, in accordance with the system of Indirect Rule, have turned the village chief into an official agent of the Administration. In this capacity he may have to give orders, enforce laws, and exact actions unpopular with his people. He is bound to stand for aims and interests which may threaten to estrange him from the community. An inconsiderate Administrative Officer may still more widen the rift. Twice I have come across chiefs who, in their official capacity and by the order of a District Officer, had to forbid all dances and festivities in a district which was

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behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

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The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'king-maker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangwa*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangwa* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

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[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The progressive chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Sakpe.

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621 622 182 successor to the chieftainship (it being thought inadvisable to depose the once appointed chief). At the same time the elders promoted him to the highest village rank next to the chief's, *Tsadu*. Having been granted this responsible position in the village government, the ex-rival of the chief seems prepared to use his influence and moral power in support of the official Village Head whom he may succeed some day.

This book cannot venture to answer the question how far the authority of the traditional chief can be strained without alienating him from the people and the elders, or without forcing the latter to abandon their role as free spokesmen of the community and become mere pawns of the chief.[1] But it must be said that in many respects the adoption of new governmental duties by the traditional chiefs is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. This readjustment seems due less to political measures as such than to the comprehensive effectiveness of culture change, which gradually diminishes certain divergences in the views to which the political executive is committed and those of the people themselves. Already many Nupe villagers appreciate medical help and education, and are sending their children to school without pressure from the chief.

For completeness' sake we must add that the balance of 'multiple control' may be endangered also by the opposite development, namely a separation between political executive and community in which the latter represents the new extraneous influences. For individuals or sections of the community may dissociate themselves from the unity of common life, alienated by modern education, new economic enterprise, or conversion to Christianity, and may thus no longer be amenable to the traditional authorities. However, this danger has not yet arisen in the Nupe village, chiefly because the 'progressive' elements flock to the town rather than stay in the village, and also because Christian influence is inconsiderable.

621 622 182 631 Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the factors that weaken the homogeneous village community are all of recent date and the results of modern colonial development. Disturbances of the 'balance' very similar to those just described, and like them entailing a strengthening from outside, as it were, of the chief's authority, were also at work in the pre-British Nupe kingdom. They are embodied in the very existence of the kingdom as a political and social superstructure which is the carrier of new values and new, manifold, cultural influences.

First the purely political factors. We have heard of the insignia and emblems of chiefly power which, according to tradition, were bestowed on village chiefs by the ancestor-king of Nupe; the most ancient form of

[1] It is possible that in communities in which the 'multiple' system of control is less delicately adjusted, and the political authority of the chief more independent of the other principles governing community life, the political power of chief and elders can be used more freely for new tasks. This adds, I think, a new meaning to the following statement by Sir Donald Cameron: 'The Native Authorities Ordinance also makes provision for the limitation in particular instances of the powers which may be exercised by a Native Authority, for some of these are well organized and experienced while others are of . . . weaker mould.' ('Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, xxxvi, Supplement, p. 13.)

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village chieftainship is thus thought of as an office held 'by the grace of the king'. I have also mentioned that the appointment of the village chief is subject, to-day as of old, to confirmation by the *Etsu* Nupe. The chief thus becomes the official representative of the king, responsible to him for law and order and the collection of tax, but also able to rely on his sovereign's spiritual or political support. The people of the village can appeal to the *Etsu* if they are dissatisfied with their chief, and in the case of rival claims to chieftainship the king would be called upon to decide between the claimants—a role which he did not always undertake impartially; bribes offered by a chief threatened with the loss of his position or a new claimant would easily influence his decision.[1] The control of the king over his chiefs is expressed already in the ceremonial of the appointment. The chief-elect, accompanied by the head elders, would be summoned to the capital to receive his appointment and to be vested with a gown, turban, and sandals as insignia of his office, in a ceremony which closely resembles the investiture of officers of state or members of the royal nobility. The *Etsu* Nupe may also be called in to arbitrate in internal disputes, e.g. over the succession to local ranks —we remember the example from Doko. Lastly, legal cases come under the jurisdiction of the *Etsu* and his appointed agents, thus removing from the orbit of the community the right to see offences punished and retaliation achieved.

Another source of 'disturbance' lies in the impact of Islam. It led in many cases to a spiritual separation of chief and community, for many chiefs embraced Islam (at least nominally) long before the rest of the people. Thus these chiefs can no longer organize, and rarely even show interest in, the traditional religious ceremonies which weld the community into a single congregation. Nor can they base their authority, hereditary or not, on that spiritual commonness of which it was once an expression. They rely instead more or less openly on the closer association with the Mohammedan rulers of the country with whom they now share the creed—at least one feature of their exalted position. In its ever-increasing scope of proselytizing, Islam drives the wedge of another class distinction into the structure of village society. The distinction between Mohammedans and pagans in a village often has this effect, that the two sections differ not only in religious observances, but also in general mode of life, dress, important food habits (Mohammedans do not drink sorghum-beer, the traditional ceremonial drink of the Nupe peasants), their—often imaginary—educational qualification and, again, in the degree of the affinity they could claim to the highest social stratum in the country.

In other spheres of life—economic, educational—similar influences are at work, striking at the very roots of social homogeneity. But we may cut short our description; we shall meet with these influences again later. Our present discussion has established the main facts. For at least a century and a half the Nupe village did not exist in that self-centred, secure isolation in which the balance of its social system could fulfil

[1] Bribes to the *Etsu* are said to have played an important part in gaining the assent of the king when the new chiefs of Doko usurped the chieftainship.

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itself ideally. Through the person of its head, first of all, the village organization is bound to duties towards, and linked with the fate of, the wider political organization—the kingdom. Through religious, economic, and educational factors which follow in the wake of political absorption the one-ness of community and political organization which proved the essence of the village society is finally broken. The communities themselves, their areas of integrated social life, are broken open and forced partly into a system of integration, under the dictate of a concept of social unity which is part of the centralized political system of the state. I say 'partly', for the latter has to some extent left intact the social identity of the village. This is not meant only historically, but refers to the relation and actual inter-penetration of two essentially different social systems. Nor does it refer merely to a distinction between political autonomy of the village, or certain villages, as against political domination by the kingdom. One may perhaps speak of a partial autonomy of the villages under or within the kingdom, but the essential point is the different solution of the problem of political integration in one and in the other case. We have met with the analogous difference when we discussed the two different systems of political unification evolved by the two sub-tribes Kyedye and Beni. Let me formulate it again: it is the difference between an organization growing out of and utilizing the potentialities of uniform culture and common life, and an organization relying on the extraneous machinery of political control; between a political integration which remains true to the concept of Community, and an organization which forces unity upon diversity of culture and common life—the State.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop
[485] outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
● [621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps permanently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa* (or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or *Asari*), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where imported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroidered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

621 Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
554 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into
571 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the powerful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or *efu Dzwoáfu*, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen, slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protection and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong, permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change; every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour
571 of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accordance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three *ekpā*, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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linked with a title or name, encased in these *ekpā* which bear the name of a royal house, the group of commoners rallying round a noble patron, and the nobility rallying round a dynastic head—this is one of the most conspicuous symbols of the political relationships which rule the capital.

The political administration of Nupe kingdom (like every political administration) can be regarded as an organization guaranteeing order and security to the subjects of the state—individuals and groups—in return for specific forms of submission: submission of individuals to the established rules of conduct; surrender, by groups, of all independent political action; and surrender, by individuals and groups, of portions of their property in the form of taxes and tributes. The law-abiding, tax-paying citizens are thus promised protection against enemies at home and abroad, and general security for carrying on their daily work, holding markets, using the roads, and enjoying the fruits of their labour. With regard to individuals, a legal machinery safeguards their civic rights, that is, their claims to this protection. With regard to subject groups, we may speak of constitutional rights in which this safeguard of security is embodied. The element of reciprocity implied in these constitutional rights, namely, the promise of security in return for a surrender of autonomy, is clearly understood by the people. This is shown in the current interpretation of such political measures as the suppression of the Kyedye attack on the town of Kacha described above. The intervention of the central government on behalf of Kacha is positively linked with the previous surrender of autonomy (*a gba ya Bida*, 'they submitted to Bida').

A striking feature of the internal organization of Nupe are the considerable regional differences in the completeness and directness of administration and the frequent changes which it has undergone in the fifty years of Fulani rule. These variations and changes have a threefold explanation: (1) They interpret, in terms of political status, the cultural and ethnical provenance to which we referred in the preceding chapter. (2) They are a compromise between the superstructure of the state and certain claims to autonomy, admitted mainly because of the difficulty of establishing a more complete control—for example, over the strongly organized river-state of the Kyedye, or over the newly absorbed 'outside' groups on the periphery of the kingdom. (3) They are a compromise also between centralization and delegation of power. The delegation of power represents an essential structural characteristic of the Nupe political system. The ever-expanding kingdom, increasingly dependent on the military help of the nobility, had to secure their services more and more by granting them landed property in the form of fiefs, and thus investing them with a portion of territorial sovereignty. But then, only through this indirect—feudal—administration could the expanding state hope to reach and to control its entire population, above all those scattered village units which never evolved a larger political system than could be fitted easily (like the Beni confederacy or the Kyedye political organization) into the large-scale framework of the Nupe state.[1]

[1] Compare the similar situation in Imperial Rome: "The state had to appeal to private persons of wealth and influence because it was not able to transmit its

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634 territory which he is called upon to rule to-day, the richest trade centre of the country, is inhabited to a very large extent by strangers, traders, craftsmen, and canoe-men from other parts of the country, many of them from Bida, that is, by people who reluctantly bow to the rule of a culturally 'inferior' peasant chief. It is not surprising, therefore, that his administration of the district proved unsatisfactory, and that the *Etsu* felt justified in urging the District Officer to reinstitute in this responsible office a member of his own class.

The District Heads live in their districts; they reside in the largest town and hold there their little court, an exact copy of a nobleman's household in the capital. They have to make frequent tours of inspection of their area, and at regular intervals they visit the capital to report to the *Etsu*, especially at the time of the great Mohammedan festivals when all officers of state assemble at the king's court. District Heads are sometimes transferred from one district to another, but the tendency to-day is to let them stay in one district as long as possible so as to become thoroughly familiar with the people and the local problems of administration. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their districts, their main task being the supervision of tax collection; but they are also charged with such non-political tasks as finding pupils for the elementary schools of the Emirate. Their subordinates in the administrative machinery are the various Village Heads of the district, of whom we have heard already.[1] The District Heads are further assisted in their work by a staff of official and semi-official helpers—scribes, messengers, policemen, and the host of *bara* and henchmen who attach themselves to every man of rank.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

633 The administration of Bida town has undergone many changes in the thirty or forty years of British Administration. The original system was 621 based to some extent on the division of the town into a number of 'wards', each associated with an influential member of the Bida nobility. The town was divided into twenty *efu* (or, as they were known officially, *ungwa*—the Hausa word for town ward); five of these wards were grouped together as one large *ungwa*, and these four *ungwa* were placed under four men of high rank: *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Galadiman Gari*, and *Gabi Seidi*. The four *ungwa* bore no relation to the dynastic division of Bida into three *ekpā*; their arrangement simply followed the four main roads which cross the town from north to south and east to west. However, the four rank-holders in charge of the large *ungwa* as well as the other subordinate ward-heads in the small *ungwa* (or *efu*) were actually living in the part of the town over which they had been placed; the link of locality which is so relevant in Nupe life was thus recognized officially. Later, however, this system of ward-heads lent itself to certain abuses, bribery and extortion of tax-money; it was abolished by the Administration and replaced by a new system which now divides the town into four

[1] See p. 52.

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ungwa (the same four *ungwa*), defined geographically as Bida North, South, East, and West. Four new officials were appointed who are no longer inhabitants of 'their' *ungwa* but are supposed to be jointly responsible for the whole town, irrespective of their personal connexions with one or the other locality. The Hausa and Yoruba communities of Bida, who live in *lálemi*, were placed under their own ward-heads. These six officials form the present Town Council. A royal prince, the *Natsu*, was appointed as its chairman, and at the same time as the representative of the *Etsu* on the Town Council. The attached sketch-map illustrates the changes in the town administration.

A certain inner weakness of this system becomes apparent at once. It lies in the disregard for the factor of locality and for those direct contacts and bonds of 'protection' and personal attachment which alone establish in Nupe a relationship of mutual confidence between the social classes, between ruler and ruled. It is not surprising therefore that the new division into four geographical areas 'did not work', and that in 1936, only three years after its introduction, a fundamental reorganization was contemplated.[1]

TAXATION

The taxation of the Emirate is fixed by the District Officer, who tours the country and, assisted by District Head and Village Head, assesses the income of the various villages and districts. The tax unit is the village area.[2] The distribution of the tax among the people of the village and its dependencies is left to the Village Head and his elders. Taxation varies partly from district to district and is also different in town and country. Complaints against too heavy taxation, or reports on defaulting, are forwarded through the District Head to the capital, that is, to the Emir's Council and the District Officer. Tax defaulters can be imprisoned.

Of the total tax revenue of the Emirate (to which are added fines, licence fees, &c.) 30 per cent. goes to the Central Government of Nigeria and 70 per cent. to the N.A. Treasury.[3] From the N.A. share in the revenue are paid the salaries of all (native) N.A. officials, the expenses of all Public Works for which the Emirate is responsible, the maintenance

[1] In a memorandum for the reorganization of the Bida Town Council, which I drew up on the request of the Administration, I have suggested (1) a town division based on the division into three *ekpā*, which is so eminently characteristic of the social life of the kingdom, and (2) a system of election of ward-heads by the people themselves. The latter would, in my view, utilize and render more valuable the channels of personal connexion between patron and client, trusted 'protector' and the ignorant, intimidated commoner who still feels that he could only benefit from the association with a man of rank and learning.—A paper on the same subject was published in abridged form in the *Summary of Lectures*, Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, 1937, pp. 97–8. See also p. 123.

[2] Lord Lugard, Colonial Reports Misc., No. 40.

[3] This scale corresponds to the position of Bida Emirate as a First Class Emirate. In 1935–6 the scale was slightly altered in favour of the N.A. share, because the building of the *Etsu*'s new official residence—a typical item of N.A. expenditure—would not have been possible without this additional revenue.

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425 from farming stock, that is, whose family is holding land already, the usual way to acquire land is to exercise his claim to a parcel of the land that is held jointly by the family group, and which is administered and apportioned by the family head. This would be the procedure, for example, in the case of a young member of the family who had founded a family himself and now requests land for a farm of his own. More or less the same situation would arise in the case of a stranger, a native of Nupe though not of the particular village, or even a native of Nigeria (a Hausa or Yoruba) though an alien in Nupe, who, having been adopted into a household, may request land on which to settle. There is, however, the possibility that the family land available at the time is insufficient; or there might be a man desiring land whose family had not held land previously or had lost the claim to the land, e.g. through overlong absence. Here two main methods offer themselves: first, the man desiring land can exercise his right as a member, native or adopted, of the village community to request land (possibly additional land) from the chief, which may be either land that has been under cultivation previously but has fallen vacant, or virgin land within the village territory. 427 Second, he can acquire new land through an arrangement with an individual landlord (using the term here in the widest sense); in other words, he can lease land temporarily for a rent in kind—a method known in Nupe as *aro*, 'borrowing'. In both these methods the land thus acquired is inalienable.

● [631]

A third method closely related to borrowing is a lease for life or for an indefinite period, in most cases against a single payment in money to which is added a fixed rent in kind. This arrangement, which definitely recognizes the money value of land, may be tantamount to real purchase. Fourth, there exists hereditary tenantship, which gives the tenant absolute right over his land, including the right to dispose of it again or sublet it. This tenantship I shall call (for reasons which will become clear presently) *secondary* tenantship. It implies not a fixed rent but a share in the produce—a form of métayer system.[1] Finally, there exists a *primary* tenantship, in which a landlord who himself owns the land by the right of conquest or appropriation may cede complete and absolute rights over land to another person, Nupe or stranger, in recognition of (political) services rendered; here again a share in the produce is implied. The last two methods form part of the feudal organization of the Nupe state.[2]

425 427 We have thus five methods of land acquisition, which fall in two main categories: (1) Acquisition in virtue of membership of a group (kinship

[1] See A. Marshall, op. cit., p. 643.

[2] Different from these traditional methods of acquiring and transferring land is the method of land-tenure under the Native Land Ordinance Act, which, adjusted to modern requirements, involves the lease of native land to non-natives, i.e. non-Nigerians (a merchant who plans a trading-station, a missionary who intends to build a school or church, &c.). In such cases application for a lease of a parcel of the land that has been retained as Crown land must be made to the Administration. This method, and all questions entailed in it, will be disregarded in the following. It is, in fact, of very little significance in Nupe country where no commercial utilization of land and no settlement of non-natives exist.

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group or village community), holding 'corporate' rights to land. (2) Acquisition of land in virtue of a contract between individual landowners—a short-term contract such as the 'borrowing' of land, or a long-term, or indefinite, contract such as is embodied in tenantship and in the granting of land for services rendered. The methods summarized under the first category occur both in Trans- and Cis-Kaduna; of the methods summarized under the second category only 'borrowing' occurs in Trans-Kaduna; all acquisition and transfer of land for indefinite periods is restricted to the 'conquered' area east of the Kaduna.

Village Land

The village land is administered, that is, held in trust and apportioned —in Nupe terminology 'owned'—by the chief. Linguistically the specific character of his administrative right to the disposal of village land is not defined very clearly. The Nupe refer to the chief's control over land in exactly the same terms which they use for the direct utilization and ownership of land by a family head or any individual farmer. The Nupe would use the same term also when speaking of the territory belonging to a village, i.e. the land that is 'owned' by the people of the village collectively.[1] Understood in the widest sense of the word, this village land embraces a territory surrounding the village in a rough circle. It comprises three kinds of land, each called by a different name: (1) occupied land fallow or actually worked, in the hands of families or individuals—*latí*, 'farm'; (2) vacant land which has once been occupied but has fallen back to the common fund of land held in trust by the chief for future allotment—mostly referred to as *gonta*; and (3) a fringe of virgin land claimed by the village community as a land reserve—called *cikã*, 'bush', or, again, *gonta*. The second and third kind of land we will call 'village land' in the narrow sense, as against land of the first kind, 'family land'.

The border between the fringe of virgin land which is regarded as the land reserve of the village and the stretch of no-man's-land which separates it from the territory of the next village is fluid and never rigidly defined. There are no marks or boundary signs. But in the sparsely populated area of Trans-Kaduna this never leads to disputes between villages. The fluidity of this boundary is, in fact, an essential part of the elastic system of Nupe settlement, with its star-like expansion and founding of new 'colonies' which, step by step, extend the village territory. The area of village land rarely stretches beyond a radius of three miles: in other words, the Nupe farms are situated within an hour's walk from home. In some cases, where the farms are farther away, the farmers build small grass huts on the farms, in which they can find shelter in a rain or storm or spend the night if it is too late to walk home. Should the people of the village, in their search for new land, go beyond this easy reach, they would found new, permanent settlements, village

[1] The Nupe would say, for example: *Žitsu wũ kin kpátá*, the chief owns all the land; or *Dokociži wũ kin babó*, the people of Doko own the land round here; but also *Kolo-gá wũ lati-o*, it is Kolo who owns this farm.

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'colonies' or *tunga*. The *tunga* thus possesses land in its own right, but at the same time pushes its territorial possessions further into no-man's-land.

Access to Village Land

There is no general rule for the distribution, within the area of village land, of the farms belonging to the various family groups and individuals. Roughly one may say that the small individual plots (called *bucá*—a term to be explained presently) are situated near the village and the larger family plots (*efakó* plots) farther afield. When old men own plots of their own they, too, are given plots near the village so that they should not have to walk too far. The different plots which belong to the group of people living together in the same house (as a rule, a single family group), whether the plots are worked jointly or independently by the various household members, do not necessarily lie together, but are frequently scattered. Nor have the people who live together in the same *efu* their land on adjoining sites, or in the neighbourhood of the part of the village where they live. We may add that, again, there exist no special signs or boundary marks to distinguish the property of different farmers. A narrow path, a border of shrubs, or a tree, serve as landmark.[1] But the different cultivation that may be practised on the different fields, or the different stage of cultivation which the different fields may represent (fallow land, land that has been worked for one year, or two years, &c.), make these boundaries more obvious to the eye.

This irregular distribution of farm-plots appears to be due to a variety of causes. To some extent it is entailed in the complex agricultural technique of the country, with its many different types of cultivation and its regular system of rotation of crops. Every farmer owns a certain number of fields—some under cultivation while others are lying fallow—which he tries to distribute over different sites so that he can utilize different types of soil, e.g. the marshy sites near watercourses for the cultivation of rice or sweet potatoes, dry sandy soil for ground-nuts, heavier soil for yam and cotton, and so forth. This arrangement also has the advantage of distributing more evenly the risks of failure. You often find farmers complaining that one site on which they have a farm is less good than another, or has perhaps suffered special injury that year through birds or through thieving baboons, or has been washed away by a flooded river. But the irregular distribution of farm-plots is also a result of the very method of Nupe settlement: it could not be otherwise with the farm-land lying in a circle round the large villages in which a numerous population is concentrated. There would not be room enough for all family groups in the village to have their lands arranged in compact blocks in equally favoured positions, both with regard to the distance from the village and to the quality of the soil. Moreover, some plots more heavily worked than others 'tire' sooner and must be replaced by virgin land lying farther afield; and growing families must provide more land for their

[1] A characteristic exception are a few marsh-land plots near Kacha, which are properly fenced in—'because of the many disputes' that arise over this kind of land.

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adult members. All these factors have in the course of time contributed to make the map of Nupe village land the irregular patchwork it is to-day.

At the beginning of this section I have mentioned the possibility that a family head may have to request additional land from the chief for a junior family member for whom he cannot find sufficient land on his own property. To-day, this is rarely put into practice, usually only in the extreme case when a whole section of the family, finding the available land near the village insufficient or too poor in quality, sets out to colonize a piece of virgin land and eventually to settle there as founders of a new *tunga*. In the normal case—especially in Trans-Kaduna—when land has to be found for an individual family member, the family head is as a rule expected to possess sufficient land to effect this readjustment. The family head, owning three to four different fields, each of about 4 acres, can, in fact, well afford it in a society with so low a birth-rate. The worst that may happen is that for a time the family head may have too much of his land lying fallow to be able to find additional land for the family member who desires a new farm. It is then that the method of 'borrowing' land is practised.

Let us consider now more closely the position of the chief with respect to the question of access to village land. Control over the land is part of his political authority. It is, as I called it, an administrative control only, and this is expressed in a balanced, twofold, limitation of the claims to land of chief and community, of the power of the chief to apportion or withhold land, and of the power of the family head to claim and keep land. As regards the former limitation, the chief cannot reasonably withhold land from any claimant of whom the other elders of the community approve. Nor is the chief's own farm-land out of proportion to that of any other family head with an equally large working-group at his command. As regards the latter limitation, the control which the chief retains over all reapportionment of village land is acknowledged whenever the main family land changes hands, that is, in the case of succession to the position and property of a family head.[1] The chief must be informed of all such changes, and in some parts of Nupe he summons at this occasion the family members with their new head and reminds them of their obligations towards each other: the family members, that they will now work on the land of the new family head, and the family head that he has now assumed the responsibility to feed and clothe his people and, some day, to supply them with land of their own. Sometimes a gift to the chief of one pail of whatever crop is just ripe seals the pact. The annual village tax in kind, *dzankd*, which, as we know, was formerly paid to the chief by every family head, is itself a land-tax, a recognition of the chief's control over the village land. It consisted in a gift of one to three bundles of millet or sorghum, the amount varying with the condition of the crop. A complete failure of the crop meant exemption from the *dzankd*. The *dzankd* was thus not regarded as a fixed tax, but rather as

[1] The succession to the position of family head being, in most cases, identical with the succession to a *nüsa* rank, the procedure described here holds good for both (see p. 50).

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difference in quality and value to a much greater extent, namely, fruit-bearing trees.

In most districts the chief has a special title to certain economically valuable fruit trees wherever they grow, on vacant land or on people's farms. In Doko and Shebe this special chief's tree is the locust-bean, in Kutigi and Wuna the oil-palm. In Mokwa there exists another regulation, namely, that all shea-nut and locust-bean trees inside the town belong to the chief, while the trees outside are the full property of the man on whose ground they stand. Also there is in many places the general rule that no fruit tree on village land may be cut down without the special permission of the chief. Sometimes family heads exercise a restricted right to the 'chief's trees' growing on their land, i.e. they return two-fifths of the crop to the chief and keep the rest. But the chief may also grant the full possession of these trees as a separate right; thus he bestows the property of a certain number of valuable trees on an individual—young or old—as a recognition of higher civic status, together with the promotion to rank and title. The right to the trees, coupled with the rank, remains the property of the 'house', conditional upon the renewal of the appointment (to the same or a similar rank) after the death of each holder.[1] The shea-nut trees—to-day of considerable commercial importance—occupy everywhere in Nupe a special position. The trees on vacant land (virgin village land or no-man's-land) are common property. The women who collect the fruit go out in small parties and share the crop among them. The shea-nut trees on occupied farm-land belong to the owner of the farm.[2] In either case the exploitation of the crop is the exclusive prerogative of the women.

A few words may be given to a special variety of village land, the plots that are situated in the village itself, round the compounds and between the village *efu*. This land is owned by the people who live in the compounds adjoining the plots. Its inheritance and apportionment is ruled by the same regulations as the inheritance and apportionment of the houses themselves and will best be discussed in a later section. The land inside village and town differs only in one respect from the village land without: it is never left uncultivated. Manured as it is by the refuse from the houses it can be used continuously without the necessity of being left fallow for a period. If the owner of such plots leaves the village or the town and does not return for some time, leaving no one behind (which has happened frequently in Bida during the last twenty years), the neighbours will use the farm-plots; they are always ready,

[1] A certain complication arises when the modern official Village Head is not identical with the traditional chief, for the former may assume control over the land only, not over trees—he may indeed not possess any 'chief's trees' himself, at least not at the time of his appointment. There is no evidence as yet to show how this contradiction will be solved in the course of time—except an indirect evidence to be mentioned presently (see p. 189, n. 2), which tends to show that this separation of land- and tree-rights is allowed to last for several generations.

[2] The facts mentioned here will correct the statement made by some students of West African agriculture, that 'shea-nut trees are generally regarded as entirely common property' (O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, *West African Agriculture*, 1933, p. 27).

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423 however, to give them up as soon as the former owner or his heir may return, even if he had been absent for a longer period than three years— 621 the period of absence stipulated in the village. I have heard of no dispute that has ever arisen over these house-plots, either in the village or in Bida town.

Strangers as Settlers

609 From the land which the chief holds in trust he apportions land on request to strangers who come to settle in a Nupe village and equally, as 425 we have seen, to natives of the village who, through long absence, have 621 forfeited the claim to their family land. The procedure is the same for both. It is interesting to examine these regulations, especially because this form of granting land implies a previous adoption of the applicant into a local household. Generally speaking, the Nupe like strangers—respectable strangers—to settle in their villages. This fact reflects both the lack of pressure on the land and the attitude of a commercially highly developed country which is ready to welcome new citizens, very likely people who bring with them new techniques and new valuable knowledge.[1]

The stranger who decides to settle in a Nupe village will first stop for some time in the house of a family head, perhaps a friend, or friend of a relation, who is ready to accept him as a temporary member of the household. Be it a short or prolonged stay, strangers will never be expected to [431] pay for their 'lodgings'. A small present of food or kola-nuts is the only compensation. The guest will keep his own *ménage*. But after a time he comes to be regarded as an adopted member of the house, and then it is time to make his request for land and a site for a house of his own. This request will always be done through the *emitsó*, the Owner of the House, who will bring the case of his guest to the notice of chief and elders. The *emitsó* will have to vouch for the character and reputation of the applicant—a bad reputation would invariably lead to a rejection of the application. The procedure (which varies slightly in different places) is [431] this: a preliminary gift, called *emisa*, 'salute', consisting of ten to twenty kola-nuts, a fowl, a calabash of beer, or—more rarely—money, accompanies the formal request to the chief. Another gift of kola-nuts is made later to the chief's representative (one of the elders), who will go with the applicant to stake out the farm-plot and the site for the house, and who 609 may become later an important witness if any dispute should arise. Now the new landowner sets to work. For two to three years he is exempted 621 from tax. Then, when the crops have been good, he pays his first 425 *dzankú*, not yet to the chief himself, but to the family head in whose 651

[177] [1] We have mentioned evidence of this already, e.g. the Bornu settlers who have introduced onion-growing into Kutigi, or the Yoruba-Konú who introduced weaving and indigo dyeing in Yoruba fashion. At the hearing of a court case—it was a rather involved dispute over a house in Kacha that had been 'sold' by the late owner in order to obtain money for tax arrears (the only case of this kind that has ever come to my notice), as a result of which his widow had now no place to go to—the *Etsu*'s Court officially recommended that 'strangers should always be adopted into one's household and given a hut to live in'.

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609 621 425 651

house he had been staying before, and the latter returns half of the gift to the chief. The next *dzankâ* will be the ordinary land-tax of every member of the village community, presented to the chief directly. To-day the first part of the procedure has remained unchanged, except that the application (and sometimes the presents as well) may also be addressed to the District Head.[1] But the annual *dzankâ* is now replaced by the Government tax.

609 425 621

The grant of land to strangers never includes the trees growing on the farm-land. They remain the property of the village chief or the other native inhabitants, and this makes the analogy between strangers and adopted household members full: for like the strangers junior family members cannot own trees, although they hold land of their own.[2]

Access to Family Land

423 622

This question will be examined in detail later, and no more than a short summary is needed here. Three methods regulate the access of the individual member of the family group to the family land held jointly by the group and administered by the family head. (1) Temporary and restricted access to this land is embodied in the right of every male member, boys as well as adults, to a small plot of his own, which he can work independently. Such plots are called *bucá*, and the individual work on the plots is called *bucá* work. (2) Adult male members of the family group, who have already founded a family of their own, may claim a large farm of the kind that is worked jointly by a number of family members. This farm and farm-work is called *efakó*. (3) The fullest access to family land is embodied in inheritance and in the succession to the position of family head. This position implies control over all family land that the family head holds in his hands. The first two forms of access are 'family affairs' arranged without any formality; the last transaction implies, as we have seen, a formal reference to the chief. The chief's control over the occupied village land is thus made conspicuous not with respect to land that is apportioned on a small scale to individuals for direct use, but with respect to the land that is to be held in trust for future distribution by the new family head. The chief, in other words, as he is bound himself to trusteeship, guarantees the trusteeship undertaken by others. The analogy in the position of chief and family head with respect to land is clearly recognized by the Nupe. Both are heads of corporate groups, and both administrators of the joint rights vested in the groups. Both, moreover, hold the same special, economically significant, right to trees.

[1] I am not sure if this is really prescribed by the regulations. I know that in Agaie Emirate all peasants thought it was. In any case it would save a lot of trouble, should disputes arise later, if one had the District Head for a witness of the original transaction.

[2] This rule also holds good with respect to large groups of alien settlers. In Kutigi, for example, it led to the anomalous position that the Benu settlers, although they had become the political rulers of the community and supplied the chief of 'Greater Kutigi', owned no trees at all in the beginning, and still own very much less than the family heads of the *kintsoźi*, the Owners of the Land, that is, the original inhabitants.

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allegiance, suffice to make the landlord refuse a renewal of the tenancy or even to cancel a running tenancy. Several cases of this kind have come to my knowledge; one even found its way to court: L., a nobleman of high rank, evicted his tenant (and this in the middle of the planting season!) because he had lacked in loyalty towards him and 'betrayed his confidence'.

Political changes have brought about an interesting development. To-day the initiative in this kind of tenantship has to some extent passed from the tenants to the landlords themselves. The landlords were, as we have seen, mostly warriors and courtiers who, living in the capital, never worked their land themselves, but settled their slaves on it, and had it worked by their labour. When slavery was abolished and wars came to an end, when the 'absentee' landlords no longer needed *bara* as soldiers for their private armies and could no longer support a large household of henchmen and hangers-on in the town, they offered their land to their *bara*, and so new settlers went out into the country, occupying the land and founding new farm settlements. Sometimes the noble landowners even settled some of their relations in this fashion on the land, nephews and younger brothers, for whom no place or job could be found in town.

All these farm settlements, whether they were for slaves or *bara*, for peasants turned client or clients turned peasant, are called *tunga*—the same name that is applied to the Nupe village 'colonies'. But the 'private' *tunga* has no name of the kind villages possess, but bears the name of the noble patron to whom it 'belongs'. These *tunga* settlements are scattered all over Cis-Kaduna, and surround Bida in a dense belt. There are innumerable hamlets called Sokyara, Maiyaki, Ndeji, or similar titles of nobility—the titles of the landlords under whose patronage the settlements were founded. To our description of the village *tunga* given in a previous chapter we will add here a few examples of the 'private' *tunga*.

Etsu-Kolo (about four miles south of Bida), consisting of two compounds, two families which are distantly related. Called after the founder of the *tunga*, the father of the present family head. This Etsu-Kolo had been, like his father before him, a *bara* of the *Cekpa* in Bida. Later, however, Etsu-Kolo transferred his allegiance to the then ruling Emir, *Etsu* Mohamadu. The change of allegiance proved good policy: *Etsu* Mohamadu procured for him the position of a Village Head for the whole district with its many *tunga* settlements. Since then the family had remained faithful to *Etsu* Mohamadu's house, even after the Village Headship had been abolished again; they are still paying their regular *dzankà* to his successors, at present to the *Shaba* in Bida.

Emi Bwori ('House of Bwori', one mile north of Bida), called after a certain Bwori, the head of the guild of Bida butchers, and a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. This Bwori settled his own slaves in this *tunga*. The present owners of it regard themselves as *bara* of the descendants of Bwori, but have abandoned paying *dzankà* to them; but they still go to 'salute' them whenever they come up to town.

Lumanen (four miles west of Bida), a group of very prosperous *tunga* settlements, founded at different times by relations and noblemen attached to the royal house of *Etsu* Masaba. One settlement has been built by the

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father of the present *Maiyaki* for his *bara*, and is accordingly called *Maiyaki*. A second settlement is called *Emi 'tsu Saba*, and was founded in the time of the father of the present family head, who was a slave in *Etsu* Masaba's house. A third settlement was built recently, by the present family head, who was a *bara* of the present *Etsu* Saidu (also of the Masaba dynasty). All three settlements still pay their regular *dzankd* to their patrons. This year's *dzankd* amounted to one bundle of corn and ten yams.[1]

Makū (one mile south of Bida), consisting of three compounds, called after the noble patron of a certain Ndatazi, a peasant who had had a farm somewhere else first and then moved to the present site, obtaining the land with the help of the *Makū*. He lives in one of the compounds; of the other two one belongs to his brother, and one to a distant relative by marriage, who left his old farm and came here, where the land is better, also becoming a *bara* of the *Makū*. Each of the three houses pays an annual *dzankd* to the present *Makū*. It amounted this year to three bundles of corn and ten yams per compound.

Saci (three miles east of Bida), called after the *Saci* of Bida (a nobility rank). It consists of five compounds; in one a son of the *Saci* is living—the other members of his family are living in Bida—in the other compounds *bara* of the *Saci*. They have discontinued paying their *dzankd*, but still pay regular visits to their patron in town.

One word about the economic arrangement obtaining in the *tunga*. The slaves had worked the land entirely for their masters; that is to say, they had no *efakó* (family) land of their own, but were fed and clothed by their masters, and were also allotted smaller, *bucd* plots, which they were free to work for themselves. The arrangement between the landlord and the *bara* whom he settles on his land is the same métayer system which also regulates the tenantship of the free peasant who accepts clientship in order to obtain land. To-day, the difference between former slaves and *bara* has disappeared; for to most of the freed slaves their change of status meant only a promotion from slave to (free) client. Both, in a good many cases, still acknowledge this form of dependence and, as we saw, still return the annual tithe from their crops to the patron, or at least still pay their respects dutifully. The *dzankd* is no longer a compulsory tribute, and would not be upheld by the court. It is a voluntary gift which confirms the relationship of patronage and protection—a relationship which is as real to-day as it was in former times: political protection for oneself and one's children is bought cheaply with a bundle or two of corn a year.

Hereditary Land: Primary Tenantship

The acquisition of land through clientship follows the general pattern of the Nupe feudal hierarchy. A man who obtains land as a *bara* obtains it from a man of higher rank, either a royal prince or nobleman who holds the land in his own right, or from a rank-holder or titled slave or a king's *bara* who has himself obtained the land from another landlord higher up on the hierarchical scale. These 'primary tenants', however, have acquired their land by a different method, namely, through certain

[1] This census was taken in 1934, when *Etsu* Saidu was still alive.

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571 the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its
583 authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds
836 of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

511 The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—
624 demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d.* and 6*d.*). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s.*, which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s.* and 6*s.*[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

511 The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the
291 most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely
554 economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

571 But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban
369 and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s.*, and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck. [789]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *esi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

An *esi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *esi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *esi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *esi*.

The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *esi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Agunshu*, and of Shaku *Kpotun*.[21]

Village Organization

Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*Etsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeji*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *Etsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*yusaki*, sing. *yusa*, the "old ones," or *tiçiki*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*Eçi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Etsu* and *Eçi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1916; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1926) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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examination of the political organization has revealed one such machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

Economic Co-operation and Community Life. The propinquity of the Kede and *kintsoʒi* settlements, combined with the difference in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupation and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsoʒi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsoʒi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsoʒi*.

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The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'.

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpā*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpā*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since.

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *takū* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta dọ̀ji*.